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LETTER DATED 27 JULY 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF UKRAINE TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE, RELATING TO CONCLUDING COMMENTS ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AT THE END OF THE CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF UKRAINE*

Having familiarized myself with the content of the Comments of the Human Rights Committee on the fourth periodic report of Ukraine, I would like to express my appreciation of the work done by the members of the Committee under your able stewardship in order to elaborate recommendations so that fundamental and positive changes in Ukraine, noted by the Committee with satisfaction, be consolidated and further deepened. I can assure you, Sir, that they will be given the most serious consideration by the competent Ukrainian authorities.

At the same time I would like to draw your attention and that of the Members of the Committee to some issues which, in my view, call for additional clarification. I am referring, inter alia, to paragraph 16 of Part C "Principal subjects of concern" of the Comments which mentions "the requirement of exit visas" whereas the institute of "exit visas" was effectively abolished by the Law of Ukraine on Procedure for Leaving Ukraine and Entering Ukraine to be followed by Ukrainian Citizens (adopted 21 January 1994) which stipulates issues of one main document necessary for leaving the country - passport for foreign travel, as well as the travel document of a child and sailor's ID).

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* The fourth periodic report of Ukraine was considered at the fifty-fourth session of the Committee (1418th to 1420th meetings, held on 11 and 12 July 1995).

The concluding comments of the Committee are contained in document CCPR/C/79/Add.52.

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I would also like to stress that a basic refugee determination procedure (para. 17 of Part C "Principal subjects of concern" of the Comments) has been already established in the Law of Ukraine on Refugees (24 December 1993). The task of carrying out the provisions of this law, including determination of the refugee status has been entrusted to the Migration Service of Ukraine created by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in June 1994. Refugees whose status is recognized are being provided with the refugee's certificate: corresponding regulation has been approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 15 June 1995.

Finally, I would like to underscore that the Declaration of the Rights of Nationalities of Ukraine, as well as the Law on National Minorities, cannot but deal - by definition - with the rights of specific minority groups, namely - national, or, using terminology common in many countries, ethnic minorities. It defines rights of national/ethnic minorities in their entirety, including linguistic, cultural and religious rights. Moreover, cultural and rights of the citizens of Ukraine have been specifically guaranteed in two other legislative acts: the Law of Ukraine on Languages and the Law of Ukraine on the Freedom of Consciousness and Religious Organizations. Positive record of Ukraine in securing minority rights, absence of pattern and practice of discrimination have been confirmed by a number of authoritative international bodies. Being, however, aware of the complexity of these issues the Government of Ukraine consistently looks for the ways to preserve and further develop harmonious relations among minorities in Ukraine, addressing without delay existing issues of contention.

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